

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-28 are pending in the present application, with claims 1, 19, and 20 being independent.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication on page 8 of the outstanding Office Action that claims 2-28 would be allowable. For at least the reasons detailed below, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims should be considered allowed.

Drawings

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner indicate in any future Office Action whether or not the drawings that were filed on October 13, 2000 have been accepted (see item 10 of the Office Action Summary).

Information Disclosure Statement

An Information Disclosure Statement and accompanying PTO-1449 form were filed on October 13, 2000. There is presently no indication that the Examiner considered the documents identified in that Information Disclosure Statement. Accordingly, the Examiner is

respectfully requested to acknowledge consideration of the documents identified in that Information Disclosure Statement by initialing the PTO-1449 form and returning a copy of the initialed form to the undersigned.

Claim Objections/Rejections

The Examiner objected to claims 1 and 19, and rejected claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. §112, because of minor informalities. The objection and rejection are respectfully traversed.

Applicants have amended the claims in an effort to correct these minor informalities. Applicants also respectfully submit that the scope of the claims have not been narrowed by these amendments.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection and rejection are respectfully requested.

Double Patenting

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 19, and 20 under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting over claim 1 of co-pending Application No. 09/689,695. This rejection is respectfully traversed insofar as it pertains to the presently pending claims.

Application No. 09/689,695 is commonly owned by the Assignee of record. Additionally, Applicants submit herewith a terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 C.F.R. 1.321(c).

Accordingly, withdrawal of the double patenting rejection is

respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, this application appears to be in condition for allowance and the Examiner is, therefore, requested to reexamine the application and pass the claims to issue.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Martin Geissler (Reg. 51,011) at telephone number (703) 205-8000, which is located in the Washington, DC area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

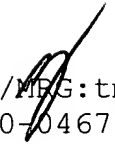
Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 

Michael K. Mutter, Reg.#29,680

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000


MKM/MBG:tm
1190-0467P

Attachment: Terminal Disclaimer
Letter Requesting Initialed PTO Form 1449